



Save Our Heritage Organisation
Protecting San Diego's architectural and cultural heritage since 1969

Thursday, January 28, 2021

Balboa Park Committee
Park and Recreation Board
City of San Diego
101 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden naming proposal support

Committee members,

Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) has reviewed the Balboa Park Conservancy's naming proposal for the Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden, located behind the Balboa Park Club, and supports formalizing this name for the garden. Further, we appreciate the funding and effort that made improving the trails, refurbishing planters, and new signage all possible. It is important to remember and recognize Kate Sessions' contribution to the park and the cactus garden with which she was so specifically involved is a fitting place.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Bruce Coons
Executive Director
Save Our Heritage Organisation



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DATE: February 17, 2021

TO: Balboa Park Committee Chair Katherine Johnston, Vice Chair Kenneth Davenport, and Committee Members

SUBJECT: In Support of Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden Naming Proposal

Balboa Park Committee Members:

Based on the extensive research conducted by the Balboa Park Conservancy, acclaimed park historian and Master Gardener Nancy Carol Carter, and the San Diego History Center, Friends of Balboa Park fully supports the proposal for the Cactus Garden in Balboa Park to be formally named in honor of Kate O. Sessions (1857–1940), as put forth by the Balboa Park Conservancy.

The extensive and enduring contributions Kate O. Sessions made to this historic garden – not to mention Balboa Park in general – via her advocacy, expertise and coordination are the primary reason this magnificent piece of the park’s landscape came to fruition. The “Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden” naming proposal will be an appropriate way to acknowledge Sessions’ direct relationship to this garden and further honor her indelible contributions to Balboa Park.

We encourage the Balboa Park Committee to endorse this proposal.

Respectfully,

John H. Bolthouse, III
Executive Director





BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE OF 100

Working to preserve Balboa Park's historic architecture, gardens, and public spaces since 1967

1649 El Prado, Suite 2 • San Diego CA 92101

Feb. 25, 2021

Dear members of the Balboa Park Committee:

The Balboa Park Committee of 100 is pleased to endorse the naming of the newly cactus garden after Kate O. Sessions, the legendary "mother" of Balboa Park.

In the 1890s she operated a nursery at the northwest corner of the park and donated trees in the park and throughout the city in lieu of lease payments. She guided early planners in determining the landscape of the park and oversaw plantings at the Hotel del Coronado and at city school sites.

She was active in helping guiding the landscaping of the exposition grounds at both fairs and for the second, she contributed cacti species for the small cactus garden behind today's Balboa Park Club.

As her biographer, Elizabeth MacPhail, wrote: "She frequently stopped to watch the men who were working in this garden and offered her advice and suggestions."

Sept. 24, 1935, was declared "Kate O. Sessions Day" at the California Pacific International Exposition. Among the tributes, George W. Marston, the "father" of the park, suggested Kate be declared "Queen Mother of the Whole Floral Kingdom," and added, "Let the state have its (Luther) Burbank, we have our Sessions."

In another tribute, The San Diego Union said: "If the whole of her lifetime's achievement could be concentrated in one place, the result would be a serene paradise of tree shadows and sunlight on bright flowers, and the groves and lawns of Balboa Park would be but one small space in its great area."

Sincerely,

Roger Showley, President
Balboa Park Committee of 100



San Diego Floral Association

1650 EL PRADO ROOM 105
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-1684

Gardens, floral design, community since 1907

DATE: February 23, 2021

TO: Balboa Park Committee Chair Katherine Johnston, Vice Chair Kenneth Davenport and Committee Members

SUBJECT: Support for re naming the Cactus Garden to honor Kate O. Sessions.

This letter is written in support of the proposed Balboa Park Cactus Garden name change. Designation of that garden as the "Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden" will offer overdue recognition of Sessions' key role in the garden's creation and focus greater attention on an under-appreciated horticultural feature of Balboa Park.

San Diego Floral Association's Board of Directors unanimously adopted a motion of support for this name change. Our organization has a unique bond with Sessions and this Balboa Park garden.

Kate Olivia Sessions was a founding member of the Floral Association in 1907. The organization's magazine, *California Garden* (published continuously since 1909) is the major forum for her copious writings, including articles proposing a cactus garden in Balboa Park. She believed that San Diego could create an open air cactus garden that "outrivaled any in the world." Sessions' 36 years of advocacy were rewarded with the approval of the garden in 1934. *California Garden* carried the good news, spearheaded a successful public appeal for plant donations and documented steps in the garden's establishment.

With wholehearted support for the proposed name change, we are most sincerely,

Lee Somerville
Jan Thoresen

Jan Thoresen and Lee Somerville
Co-Presidents, San Diego Floral Association